The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a global coalition of non-government organisations working to achieve a treaty banning the ultimate weapons of mass destruction. We are calling on all nations to take urgent action now to eliminate nuclear weapons – before they are ever used again. ICAN originated in Australia in 2007 and is modelled on the successful International Campaign to Ban Landmines.
Abolishing nuclear weapons is a paramount challenge for all people and governments. Nine nations today possess more than 15,000 nuclear weapons, with the United States and Russia maintaining around 1,800 of theirs on high alert – ready to launch within minutes. Most are many times more powerful than the two atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945. A single nuclear warhead, if detonated on a large city, could kill millions of people, with the radiological effects persisting for decades.

The failure of the nuclear powers to disarm has heightened the risk that other nations will one day acquire nuclear weapons. The only guarantee against the spread and use of nuclear weapons is to eliminate them. Although the leaders of some nuclear-armed nations have expressed their vision for a world without nuclear weapons, all have failed to set out detailed plans to eliminate their arsenals, and are instead upgrading them.

A THREAT TO ALL HUMANITY
Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power and the threat they pose to human survival. They release vast amounts of energy in the form of blast, heat and radiation.

No adequate humanitarian response is possible. In addition to causing tens of millions of immediate deaths, a regional nuclear war using less than 1 per cent of the world’s arsenal would disrupt the climate and agricultural production so severely that two billion people would be at risk of famine.

But the good news is that the international debate on nuclear weapons has started to shift away from narrow concepts of national security to focus instead on the humanitarian impact of the weapons. The resulting picture is clear: a ban on nuclear weapons is urgently needed.

GLOBAL NUCLEAR FORCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Warheads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>110–120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>120–130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>~15,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAS 2015

Nuclear weapons are not yet a relic of the past – far from it. But with your help, they can be. The next step is for nations to negotiate a global treaty banning these worst weapons of terror.
WEAPONS ALREADY BANNED

- Biological weapons: Banned under the Biological Weapons Convention 1972
- Chemical weapons: Banned under the Chemical Weapons Convention 1993
- Land mines: Banned under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty 1997
- Cluster munitions: Banned under the Cluster Munitions Convention 2008

NUCLEAR WEAPONS NOT YET BANNED GLOBALLY
Banning nuclear weapons

Nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction not yet explicitly prohibited under international law. Nations must work together to fill this unacceptable “legal gap”.

Both other types of weapons of mass destruction – chemical and biological weapons – have long been prohibited under international law, and are subject to frameworks requiring their total elimination. It is past time for nuclear weapons, the most destructive weapons of all, to be similarly banned.

The current framework regulating nuclear weapons is fragmented and patchy. A new treaty is needed to prohibit all activities involving nuclear weapons in all circumstances for all nations. History demonstrates that the prohibition of certain weapons systems – their possession as well as their use – precedes and facilitates their elimination. Weapons that are outlawed are increasingly accepted as illegitimate, and lose their political status. It is more difficult for arms companies to acquire resources for the production and modernisation of a prohibited weapon.

HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE: KEY EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>Norway hosts the first ever inter-governmental conference to examine the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, attended by 128 nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>Mexico hosts the second such conference, with 146 nations present, at which it calls for a diplomatic process to negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>The third conference, hosted by Austria, attracts 158 nations and concludes with a landmark pledge “to fill the legal gap” for the prohibition of nuclear weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2015</td>
<td>The five-yearly Non-Proliferation Treaty conference fails to agree on a pathway forward, but 107 nations pledge to work together to prohibit nuclear weapons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A DIPLOMATIC PROCESS

Three major diplomatic conferences were organised in 2013 and 2014 to shed new light on the dangers of living in a world armed to the brink with nuclear weapons. By reframing the debate on nuclear weapons, they clarified the urgent need for action by the international community to advance abolition.

More than 80 per cent of UN members have said that nuclear weapons should never be used again under any circumstances, and a clear majority have concluded that it is time to ban them given their catastrophic humanitarian consequences.
Ten reasons for a ban

The abolition of nuclear weapons, far from being a distant dream, is a humanitarian necessity. It is time for nations to negotiate a legal ban, which will help pave the way to elimination.

1 Nuclear weapons pose a direct and constant threat to people everywhere. Far from keeping the peace, they breed enmity and mistrust among nations, and have no legitimate military or strategic utility. They are useless in addressing any of today’s real security challenges.

2 Nuclear weapons programs divert public funds from health care, education and other vital services. Nuclear-armed nations collectively spend over A$150 billion each year maintaining and modernising their arsenals.

3 A global prohibition on nuclear weapons will provide a basic framework for achieving elimination. Unacceptable weapons are typically outlawed before they are eliminated.

4 A ban treaty will complement and reinforce existing legal instruments relating to nuclear weapons, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty and ban on nuclear testing.

5 A nuclear weapons ban will build on the various regional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties covering 115 nations.

6 A ban will strengthen the global taboo against the possession and use of weapons of mass destruction by establishing a clear, universal norm – helping promote disarmament and prevent further proliferation.

7 A treaty banning nuclear weapons can – and must – be pursued now by those nations that are ready to act, despite the strong resistance from nuclear-armed nations. This is the best way to break through the decades-long impasse in nuclear disarmament negotiations.

8 A ban will prevent the allies of nuclear-armed nations from supporting the use – and threat of use – of nuclear weapons.

9 It will provide a strong basis for asserting that financial institutions everywhere should divest from companies involved in nuclear weapons production.

10 Everyone’s security will be enhanced, not least of all that of people in nations currently armed with nuclear weapons, who are more likely to be victims of a nuclear attack.
At the United Nations, three in four nations – including all of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa – have supported the goal of prohibiting nuclear weapons. They must now work together to launch ban treaty negotiations.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – the largest humanitarian organisation in the world – has called for a binding agreement to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons.

The UN secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, has highlighted the lack of an international treaty outlawing nuclear weapons, and has consistently spoken in favour of prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons. He has also lent his support to ICAN.

On average, four in five people polled since 2008 in 30 nations have said “yes” to a nuclear weapons ban, including a majority of people in the nuclear-armed nations. More than 30 million petition signatures have been sent to the UN calling for a ban.

“There is urgent need to work for a world free of nuclear weapons ... with the goal of a complete prohibition of these weapons.”

– Pope Francis, September 2015
“There are many Aboriginal people who cannot go back to their ancestral land, and their children and children’s children will never know the special religious places it contains. This is why we want nuclear weapons permanently banned and the uranium that can create them left in the ground.”

– Sue Coleman-Haseldine, of the Kokatha Mula nation, speaking in Vienna in 2014
Australia’s involvement

In the 1950s and ’60s, Australia played host to British nuclear tests, which dispersed radiation across much of the continent. Today, Australia claims “protection” from US nuclear weapons.

From 1952 to 1963, the British government, with the active participation of the Australian government, conducted 12 major nuclear test explosions and up to 600 so-called “minor trials” in the South Australian outback and off the West Australian coast.

Radioactive contamination from the tests was detected across much of the continent. At the time and for decades after, the authorities denied, ignored and covered up the health dangers. The “minor trials” dispersed 24.4 kg of plutonium in 50,000 fragments, beryllium, and 8 tonnes of uranium.

Little was done to protect the 16,000 or so test site workers, and even less to protect nearby Aboriginal communities. Today, survivors suffer from higher rates of cancer than the general population. Only a few have ever been compensated. Much of the traditional land used for the blasts remains radioactive and off limits to this day.

NUCLEAR BOMB FUEL
For decades, Australia has wilfully helped fuel production of nuclear weapons, directly or indirectly, by exporting uranium. Australian uranium was crucial to the build-up of the US and nuclear-armed China and Russia, and a deal has been brokered to sell it to India. Australia’s nuclear regulatory authority has a poor record of misleading statements and ignorance over the fate of Australian uranium.

THE WIDER PROBLEM

Nations that host US nuclear weapons on their territory
Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey

Other nations that claim nuclear protection
Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea and Spain

British nuclear arsenals. Among the newest recipients of this potential nuclear bomb fuel are nuclear-armed China and Russia, and a deal has been brokered to sell it to India. Australia’s nuclear regulatory authority has a poor record of misleading statements and ignorance over the fate of Australian uranium.

NUCLEAR TARGETING
Australia hosts US military and intelligence facilities that are vital to US preparations for nuclear war, most notably Pine Gap and North West Cape. And by claiming the “protection” of US nuclear forces, it is one of only a few dozen nations that consider nuclear weapons to be legitimate despite their horrific effects.
Time to support a ban

Australia should be at the forefront of global efforts to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons – not clinging onto the misguided belief that we are protected by these weapons of mass destruction.

The majority of the world’s nations have pledged to work together to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. Negotiations for a treaty to ban the bomb seem not only inevitable, but also imminent, and their success does not depend on the support of nuclear-armed nations.

The Australian government, rather than acting as a drag anchor, should be helping drive this major diplomatic initiative, which will put nuclear weapons on the same legal footing as other weapons of mass destruction and pave the way to their complete elimination.

NON-NUCLEAR DEFENCE
To be a fully constructive player in the ban treaty negotiations, Australia will need to confront its demon: the doctrine known as “extended nuclear deterrence”, which suggests that nuclear weapons are legitimate, useful and necessary, and denies Australia any credibility in disarmament discussions. It is also an incitement for others to acquire nuclear weapons.

Australia must close the so-called US “nuclear umbrella” and keep it shut for all time. Pope Francis has condemned the doctrine of nuclear deterrence as “an affront to the entire framework of the United Nations”, and declared the possession as well as the use of nuclear weapons to be immoral.

PUBLIC OPINION
A Nielsen poll commissioned by ICAN in 2014 showed that 84 per cent of Australians want the government to support efforts to achieve a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Many former political and military leaders, as well as prominent authors, artists, actors, scientists and businesspeople, have also signed appeals urging the government to adopt a non-nuclear defence posture and support a ban.

GET INVOLVED
- Organise a talk, meeting or film screening in your community or workplace to promote the campaign.
- Call on your state and federal parliamentarians to sign ICAN’s global parliamentary appeal for a nuclear weapons ban.
- Urge your bank or super fund to divest from companies that help produce nuclear weapons.
- Become a “BANefactor” by donating monthly to support our work.
- Enlist your organisation as an ICAN partner.
Left: Nagasaki atomic bomb survivor and disarmament advocate Sumiteru Taniguchi with a photo of himself taken in 1945.

Above: Campaigners at the first conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, in Oslo in 2013.

This image: The “One Tree” nuclear test at Maralinga in 1956.
84% of Australians want the government to join international efforts to ban nuclear weapons.∗

“The world has already banned landmines, biological and chemical weapons. It’s time to do the same for the most destructive weapons of all. Banning nuclear weapons is closer than you think.”
– Australian Red Cross

“We call on the Australian government to adopt a nuclear-weapon-free defence posture and to join other nations in working to achieve a treaty to abolish nuclear weapons.”
– 800 Order of Australia recipients

“A global ban on nuclear weapons is a humanitarian imperative of the highest order. It is necessary, feasible and increasingly urgent.”
– 130 Australian parliamentarians

∗ Nielsen poll 2014